

To: Federal Communications Commission

Re: SSB and AM Bandwidth Restrictions

I have been an amateur for 47 years and currently hold the Amateur Extra Class license. I have been active virtually all of those years and certainly have seen technology changes in modes of operation and equipment.

I witnessed the evolution of AM to sideband. I have seen the evolution of tubes to solid state devices. What once occupied an entire room, is now contained in a breadbox.

Today, we are able to do what we simply could not do, fifteen years ago, and that includes drastically improving the quality of SSB audio. Some prefer to call it enhanced, although I would prefer to call it IMPROVED.

Since 1990, a group of amateurs have gathered on 14.178 to tweek knobs, compare equipment, discuss audio topics, and generally enjoy a facet of our hobby that some call HI-FI audio, although in the strictest interpretation, the audio clearly does not qualify as HI-FI.

The ranks of the “improved” audio enthusiasts have increased to the extent it now includes thousands of amateurs throughout the US and the world. However, they are NOT broadcasting as some critics have accused, as there is no one-way transmissions and certainly no commercial or entertainment endeavors. The hams have, through experimentation, tweeking, and exchanging ideas and concepts, truly developed a beautiful sounding SSB signal.

I should point out that virtually all of these audiophiles are highly versed in electronics, particularly grounding, RF suppression, impedance matching and sound quality. Websites have been created to assist the amateur embarking on this facet of our hobby.

I should also point out that entrepreneurs have come forth to produce new products for this exploding area of our hobby. There are manufacturers such as W2IHY, HeilSound, Symetrix and many others, producing hardware and software for use by hams. Bob Heil travels for hamfest to hamfest, conducting seminars on audio and enjoys standing room only attendance at each venue.

In addition, virtually ALL major manufacturers of transceivers, including Kenwood, Icom, Yaesu and TenTec have offered audio enhancement as standard

with their top of the line radios. Virtually all the manufacturers offer expensive broad bandwidth microphones to match their radios.

In the beginning of this dissertation, I mentioned the changing of attitudes and tolerance. Without doubt, this petition would not have been filed had a couple of amateurs had a little more tolerance and an open mind toward innovation and the positive aspects of this new facet.

I have listened to 14.178 since 1990, and began to operate there two years ago. In all those years, I never heard W0YR or W6FDR. I never heard them complain about the audiophiles, nor did I hear them request a reduction in bandwidth. However, during this time, the audiophiles gained greater and greater acceptance and the following gained tremendously. From a couple of stations, the ranks swelled to hundreds. This popularity apparently incensed a couple of fellow amateurs and they sought to end the fun and enjoyment of many. Many of the comments heard from the above two stations, and including k2QBV and K1UA have not been suitable for ears on ham bands. The comments have been personally destructive, vindictive and hateful. They indicate to me that there is a lot more involved than bandwidth. The attacks by these individuals are simply a personality war and have virtually nothing to do with bandwidth.

I have recorded hour after hour of this hate speech and malicious crowding of frequencies on twenty meters, by the above mentioned amateurs and would be happy to furnish this information the Commission if requested.

Several amateurs resurrected Kenwood 850s, and with the use of the Kenwood DSP100, were able to extend bandwidth to 6k. To most audiophiles, this seemed an exaggeration of bandwidth, although granted, the sound was tremendous.

The hams using the 6k bandwidth have abandoned the "DX WINDOW" area and thus the complaints about 6k audio should be over. I do not find any of the audiophiles using bandwidth exceeding 3.4k and most less than 3k.....all using stock radios, and some using only a high quality microphone.

I urge the commission NOT to impose new regulations on bandwidth. Self-policing has worked in this case and no further action is needed by enforcement or the Commission.

I believe that measurement of bandwidth is virtually impossible with equipment available to most hams. Certainly, it would be virtually impossible to measure the difference in 3.4k and 2.8k, as filters, signal strength, band conditions all contribute to the perceived bandwidth. For many, if you are strong, have good audio, then you must be wide, which is not true in most cases.

I also strongly object to a handful of amateurs ruining a very large facet of our hobby. Will the Commission be called on to settle personal differences of all differing groups on the band ???

For 47 years, I was a General Class . At the time of “incentive licensing” I resented the Commission removing privileges from an amateur, and then offering the privilege back by additional testing. I remained a General until the improved audio bug bit me, and I decided it was time to upgrade and enjoy the fun on twenty meters.

My story is not unique and hundred of hams have upgraded or come out of retirement to enjoy the fun of improved audio.

Let us not turn back the clock on technology, nor succumb to the adage that government can solve all our problems.

I urge you NOT to impose restrictions on bandwidth for SSB or AM.

Respectfully,

**David M. Boehner
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